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BETTER SORTING OF TOBACCO COULD RAISE GROWER'S INCOME

Resales of Maryland tobacco (type 32) on Maryland auctions in 1955 brought warehousemen and dealers a half million dollars more than these buyers paid farmers.

Why didn't the farmers get some of that half million dollars themselves?

The buyers bought and resold nearly 6 million of the 37 million pounds sold by growers on the auctions in 1955. They took intelligent advantage of price fluctuations, of course. But they also did something which many growers did not do and could have done: They put much of the tobacco into more salable condition by repacking and sorting.

Repacking and sorting accounted for a part of the 11 cents per pound difference between the price paid the grower by the buyer and the price the buyer got for the same tobacco on resale.

It looks fairly obvious, doesn't it, that a great many growers could have received more money for their tobacco in 1955 if they had prepared it for market more carefully.

But, of course, this moral—if you accept there is a moral—isn't confined to 1955 or any other previous year.

This sort of situation continues from tobacco season to tobacco season.

Gross sales of the 1956 crop of flue-cured were 1.5 billion pounds. Of this amount, 114.4 million pounds, or 7.5 percent, were resales.

For burley, 22 million pounds, 4.3 percent of the gross sales of 528 million pounds, were resales. For Maryland, resales were 4.7 million pounds, 14.6 percent. Even for fire-cured and dark air-cured, resales were 1 percent and 1.7 percent, respectively.

In fact, resales have increased sharply since 1950 for Maryland, flue-cured, and burley. In 1955, Maryland resales were 50 percent larger than in 1950, both in total volume and in proportion to net sales.

Now, what could the grower have done to improve the appearance of his tobacco and, maybe, have captured some of that buyer profit for himself?

The answer is found in a close checkup of the Maryland tobacco auctions for 1955.

To begin with, many growers gave the warehousemen and dealers a fine opportunity to profit by a resale simply because the grower failed to sort and pack his crop properly.

If a basket of tobacco is poorly prepared, the buyer knows he will have to sort it into different packer grades himself. Consequently, he just refuses to pay as much for a poorly prepared basket as he does for a well-sorted basket. Then, without too much expenditure of time and trouble, he reworks the basket to make it look more inviting for his own purchasers.

Re-sorting Profitable

There's real money involved here. One typical lot of poorly sorted Maryland tobacco brought a bid of only \$29.12 for the 182 pounds last year. But the grower had a talk with a Marketing Research Division representative and decided to re-sort his tobacco.

The result was that, re-sorted and the arrangement generally improved, the same lot sold for \$69.40. The gross profit on that one lot was \$40.28—enough to pay for the fertilizer used by the average farmer on 2 acres of Maryland tobacco.

It has been estimated that better sorting and packing would eliminate as much as 90 percent of the resales, at least of Maryland tobacco.

The amount and kind of reworking that growers would have to do to cut down on the resales for this reason varies a great deal, of course. Sometimes it is merely a question of taking more pains to remove off-color and poorer leaves. In exceptional conditions, there may be a great deal of work involved in removing sand and dirt that have gotten mixed in with the leaves.

Now, how much time is it practical for the grower to spend on stripping, sorting, and packing techniques?

Obviously, it is impractical for the grower to sort his tobacco into a large number of grades. On the other hand,

simply sorting into three to four grades, according to the position on the stalk, is seldom adequate to meet the problem.

The best rule seems to be that a grower should do additional sorting according to color and quality. This would mean uniformity. Damaged leaves could be kept separate.

Wrapping with the same quality leaf as the rest of the tobacco in the hand also is desirable. Tying the hands neatly is important. So, also, is the quality of the wrapping leaves for they are on the outside of the basket and contribute greatly to the general appearance.

Another way to make your tobacco look good is to make certain of the uniformity or blending of the hands within the basket. The grower who has his stripping and sorting done at a table will find that the tobacco can be seen better and handled more easily.

If you feel you can't get your tobacco handled properly because of lack of time, labor or knowledge, it might pay you to explore the possibilities of cooperative or custom stripping and sorting.

Market Information Helps

Farmers could sometimes obtain part of the resale margin for themselves if they had more information about the market. For example, it's sometimes profitable to reject bids on certain baskets and offer this tobacco again later. You can get an unflattering bid on perfectly good tobacco sometimes for no worse reason than that it is badly placed on the floor and the light seems to distort the color of the leaf.

The dealer is alert to things like that in making a legitimate profit for himself. There is no reason why the grower shouldn't be alert, too.

C. I. Hendrickson
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

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Cattle Feeders Told By Own Spokesmen: Completing USDA Reports Aids Producer

Spokesmen for the cattle industry have joined the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service in urging cattlemen to complete accurately and return promptly periodic cattle-on-feed questionnaires.

The cattlemen gave the same reason for the request that the Crop Reporting Board has been giving down through the years: That it is to the benefit of cattlemen to do so.

That was almost the exact language of the 20 leading cattle feeders making up the Feeder Committee of the American National Cattlemen's Association when they made their plea recently at a meeting in Denver.

Full Feeder Cooperation

"Full cooperation of feeders in completing the periodic cattle-on-feed questionnaires will contribute greatly to the success of the cattle feeding industry," the committee's press release said.

J. C. Wetzler of Phoenix, Ariz., the committee chairman, urged that "feeders and stockmen reply promptly and accurately to the questionnaires mailed them by the Department of Agriculture."

Cow Business, the official organ of the American National Cattlemen's Association, echoed Mr. Wetzler's plea almost immediately afterwards.

S. R. Newell, chairman of the Crop Reporting Board, assured the committee that USDA will explore all possibilities of expanding quarterly cattle-on-feed reports to additional States and establishing monthly analyses, and will continue to revise questionnaires to meet changes in feeding patterns.

The committee also suggested that feeders obtain and use all of USDA's regular reports that would be of interest and value to cattlemen.

The cattle feeder reports include estimates of the total number of cattle on feed as of a given date. These estimates are further broken down to show the number of steers, heifers, and calves, length of time on feed, and number on feed by weight classes.

To get basic data, it is necessary, as the feeder committee emphasized, to obtain detailed reports from a representative cross section of men actually engaged in feeding cattle.

The Board also issues an annual report showing by States and by classes (cows, steers, heifers, calves) the total number of cattle on farms and ranches.

This annual inventory is supplemented by periodic reports on the number of calves born. Next come monthly reports showing the number and live-weight of cattle and calves slaughtered in commercial plants.

Further, the Board issues annually a composite report or balance sheet. This shows (by States) the number of cattle on hand at the beginning of the year, the number of calves born, the number of cattle shipped into each State during the year, the number marketed and slaughtered, death losses, and the number of cattle remaining at the end of the year.

How It Helps

The end result of all these reports is that farmers and other agricultural interests get a detailed accounting of the Nation's cattle production, one that is extremely useful for the individual in making his own production plans.

The Board makes extensive use of records of livestock marketings, in-shipment permits by State veterinarians, slaughter records from packing-houses, and similar sources. All these make it possible for the Board to prepare and publish these useful reports.

Robert H. Moats
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

CROP PRODUCTION IN 1957 MAY BE LOWEST SINCE 1951

Total 1957 crop production, it appeared on July 1, may be the smallest since 1951—even though overall yields per acre are the second highest on record, thanks to the proven know-how of the American farmer.

The total acreage of all crops planted will probably be the smallest in about 40 years. One reason is that farmers have put 21 million acres in the soil bank.

Prospects Generally Good

As of July 1, crop prospects were relatively good, except for three areas. One, a strip from North Carolina to southern New England, had had insufficient rainfall. The others, in and adjacent to eastern Oklahoma and in and adjacent to southern Illinois and Indiana, had had too much. Fortunately hurricane "Audrey" did little permanent damage to crops in lashing northeastward from Louisiana to New England, although some crop acreage was lost in local areas.

Total crop output could go up from the July 1 outlook under favorable conditions but it is hardly likely that per-acre yields will exceed the record high set last year.

A record acreage is in prospect for sorghums because of abundant moisture in the main producing area from Nebraska to Texas.

Continuing rains broke a nearly 7-year drought in the Southern Great Plains and delayed planting of corn, cotton, soybeans, and other crops in large areas from Texas to Indiana.

These same rains helped surviving winter wheat make a crop. Then in Texas, Oklahoma, and some nearby areas these rains continued through the maturing season with heavy loss to ripe wheat.

Corn acreage is the lowest since 1885 but corn production still promises to exceed slightly the 3-billion-bushel mark, which farmers have topped the last 6 years in a row. Soybeans are late

in some areas, but prospects are still good and the soybean acreage is a record high.

Forage crops, such as pasture and hays, promise ample supplies of feed for livestock. The condition of pastures is the highest in 10 years. A record hay crop is in prospect but some is of poor quality.

Lower allotments for some types of tobacco—and placing of 80,000 tobacco acres in the soil bank—have reduced tobacco prospects nearly a fourth. Flue-cured tobacco production is likely to be nearly a third less than last year but burley only slightly less.

Wheat production may be 6 percent less than in 1956; most of the reduction is in spring wheat. A big crop of oats is likely. Barley is expected to be a record high. Sugar beets and sugarcane are setting new average yield records, and sugar beets even a new production record. Rice production is down with lower acreages and lower average yields. Potato production before October 1 is expected to be 4 percent above the same period last year. Acreage of the fall crop, which makes up nearly two-thirds of the total potato acreage, is slightly less.

Summer Vegetables

Summer vegetables and melons should be up slightly because of increased acreage. Vegetables for commercial processing are 4 percent below 1956. Deciduous fruits should about equal last year. Citrus fruits should exceed 1956. Nut crops may average below 1956. Milk and egg production is high.

As usual, most of the information on which these calculations are based was furnished by thousands of farmers who are volunteer crop reporters.

The Crop Reporting Board wishes you all: "Good Crops for 1957."

Charles E. Burkhead
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

"Bert" Newell's Letter

Well, the big July acreage report covering acreage planted for this year's crop is out. This is always a tough report, but this year it was a little tougher than usual.

To begin with, we were faced with a situation that was just about the reverse of the past few years. Last year almost all anybody could talk about was drought. And last fall, when the fall plantings were being put in, things looked pretty dismal.

Then, this spring it began to rain and things in the drought area began to look up. But enough is enough, and when the rain keeps up it can be just as hard on crops as when the drought continues a long time.

All through June the headlines played up floods, many times in the same areas that had been shouting "drought" in the fall. We have a saying around here that nothing causes as much comment as a drought, except 3 days of continuous rain.

Of course, one great danger of drought, or rain, or floods, or hurricanes is that many times they get played up so much that their effect on national agricultural production is misinterpreted.

I guess that's natural because we tend to concentrate on the spectacular, not only in the case of crop conditions but in other things too. If a person concentrated on the stories of crime and kids in trouble and all the sort of things that hit the headlines, he might come up with the conclusion that the country is going to the bow-wows in a handbasket.

But when I stop and think about all the swell kids and fine young folks I know, I realize that these things that get played up so prominently, awful as they are, are really the unusual, and the vast majority of young Americans are really a pretty fine bunch.

But we were talking about floods. Did you ever look down from about 20,000 feet on a flood situation? I did, just a few weeks ago, and it really is bad in those areas where it hit. But from that high up, you see that there still is a lot of good land that is not flooded. In other words, you get the perspective over a wide area.

We in this Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, with your help, have, in effect, looked down on some 333 million acres of crops. On July 1, some of those 333 million acres looked good, some looked bad. Some were too wet and, believe it or not, some were too dry.

Total acreage of 59 crops planted or grown nets about 13 million less than last year. That's only about 0.5 million less than farmers reported in March that they intended to plant.

But in terms of acreage that is likely to come through for final harvest, it looks as though, barring unforeseen difficulties from now on, the total crop acreage harvested this year may be slightly more than last year. Prospects on July 1, in terms of total production, appeared to be about 7 percent less than last year and about 1 percent less than for the 1947-49 base period.

Of course, we have to remember that if conditions are better than average for the rest of the season and some of our late-planted crops are not caught by an early frost, total production might be better than is now indicated. If conditions are worse, production might decline some.

That, very briefly, is the way we see it now. All of us, the State statisticians, and those of us here in Washington, want to express our thanks to all of the voluntary reporters who helped us to get these facts together.

You did a swell job on the July report and I know you're going to help us keep abreast of the conditions from now to the end of the season. We'll need it.



S. R. Newell
Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

Cut Flowers

• CARNATIONS • CHRYSANTHEMUMS
• GLADIOLUS • ROSES

PRODUCTION AND SALES, 1956

INTENTIONS FOR 1957 IN 5 SELECTED STATES



FIRST REPORT

Commercial sales in 1956 of carnations, chrysanthemums, gladiolus, and roses grown in five selected cut-flower producing States totaled nearly \$40 million, according to the first report on the commercial cut-flower industry ever issued by the Crop Reporting Board.

A pilot survey was undertaken at the request of the commercial cut-flower industry. Its leaders hoped to determine from it the basis for improvement of production and marketing practices.

Type of Reports

The Crop Reporting Board plans to furnish this information through timely reports on commercial production, production trends, and values, by States.

Next step will be taken about January 1, 1958, when questionnaires will be sent to commercial producers in 10 States. These are the 5 States selected for the first report, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, and Iowa, plus 5 other selected States: New York, Ohio, Michigan, Oregon, and Texas.

Here are the highlights of the initial report:

Of the 1956 sales of nearly \$40 million, in the 5 selected States, carnations accounted for about \$10.8 million. Second was chrysanthemums, \$10.6 million; third, gladiolus, \$9.6 million; and last, roses, \$8.8 million. Two kinds of chrysanthemums—pompon and standard—were considered. Pompon sales were valued at \$6.6 million and standard at \$4 million.

It is estimated that 180 million carnation blooms were sold in the 5 States in 1956. Sales of standard chrysanthemums

are estimated at 31.5 million blooms. Sales of pompon chrysanthemums are fixed at 10.6 million bunches; of gladiolus, at 18 million dozen spikes, and of roses, at 127 million blooms.

California led the five States surveyed in the value of the 1956 sales of these four major flowers. Commercial growers in California estimated their sales in 1956 at over \$13 million; Florida, \$12 million; Illinois, \$8 million; Colorado, \$5.5 million; and Iowa, \$1 million.

These values represent gross returns to commercial producers for all sales at the wholesale level. All retail sales were reduced to an equivalent wholesale value using the average wholesale price reported for each State.

A commercial producer is defined as one who produced and sold at least \$1,000 worth of cut flowers, flowering plants, and bedding plants during 1956.

Numbers of Producers

By this definition, Illinois had 450 commercial producers of the 4 selected cut flowers in 1956; California, 443; Iowa, 130; Colorado, 126; and Florida, 94.

An important feature of the pilot study was to determine the feasibility of obtaining from producers the number of plants or acres they expect to have in production for the coming season, 1957. Comprehensive reports were received from virtually all commercial flower growers in the five States.

The pattern of changes from 1956 production varied somewhat for individual flowers and States. The continued popularity of carnations was attested by growers' intentions in California, Colorado, and Illinois to increase

the number of plants in production in 1957.

For chrysanthemums, the "intentions" pattern was more irregular. For standards, growers in Florida, Illinois, and Colorado reported increases, but Iowa growers reported a decrease. Pompon chrysanthemums showed intended decreases in California, Colorado, and Iowa, but a large increase in Florida.

Increases were indicated for gladiolus in California and Florida, but a small reduction was reported for Illinois. Rose growers in California, Iowa, and Illinois reported increases, but Colorado growers reported a decrease.

Carnation Sales

Of the four cut flowers covered in the survey in the five States, carnations ranked first in importance (on the basis of sales) in California and Colorado; roses ranked first in Illinois and Iowa; and gladiolus ranked first in Florida. Chrysanthemums were important in California, Florida, and Illinois.

Sales in 1956, as compared with figures in the census for 1949, showed

some significant trends in some of these States.

For California, sales of carnations were over five times as large as those reported for 1949. Sales of Colorado carnations were up over 80 percent. Sales of California roses were up about one-fourth; however, Illinois sales of roses were down about 20 percent.

Standard chrysanthemum sales in California were three times as large as 1949 and up over 80 percent in Illinois. California and Illinois also show substantial increases in sales of pompons. In Florida an entire chrysanthemum industry has developed since 1949 for both standards and pompons.

Gladiolus Popular

For gladiolus, 1956 sales in California and Illinois exceeded those of 1949 by over 40 percent. Florida reported about a 15-percent increase in sales.

Copies of the report are available from the Agricultural Estimates Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

Reginald Royston
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

MORE CATTLE ON FEED IN 13 MAJOR STATES

The number of cattle and calves on feed for market in 13 major feeding States on July 1, 1957, was estimated at 3,681,000 head by the Crop Reporting Board. This is 8 percent more than the 3,397,000 head on feed July 1, 1956.

The States are Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas (Corn Belt States), and Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and California.

The seasonal decline from April 1 to July 1 of this year was 16 percent, compared with 20 percent decline during the corresponding period in 1956.

Numbers placed on feed in the 13 States during the 1957 April-June quarter, at 1,576,000 head, were 2 percent above the 1,538,000 head in the

corresponding 1956 quarter. Marketings at 2,297,000 head were 3 percent below the 2,363,000 head last year.

Cattle and calves on feed in the Corn Belt States on July 1 totaled 2,832,000 head, up 7 percent from the 2,641,000 head of July 1, 1956. Figure for the 4 Western States was 849,000 head, up 12 percent from 756,000 head on July 1, 1956. Texas was the only one of the four States showing a decline in the number on feed.

All of the Corn Belt States showed increases, except Kansas which was unchanged, and Nebraska which was down 12 percent. Both the number of cattle and calves placed on feed and the fed cattle marketed in the nine States during the second quarter of 1957 were below 1956 figures.

GRAPE GROWERS PROFIT MORE BY USE OF STORAGE TESTS

A great many growers of Emperor grapes—one of the major storage varieties in this country—are profiting by new Marketing Research Division techniques for estimating in advance which lots of grapes are likely to do best in resisting spoilage.

The simple and inexpensive method, worked out at the U. S. Horticultural Field Station in Fresno, Calif., helps the grape packer take the guesswork out of storage.

Grower Is Helped

This, in turn, is of help to the Emperor grower in at least three eventualities:

1. He profits if he is a member of a farm cooperative because the grapes belong to him until they are sold. Since losses from decay in storage are losses to him, it's to his interest to get the kind of grapes into storage that will resist decay as long as possible and to market susceptible lots before decay has a chance to develop.

2. He profits, for the same reason, if he has a deal by which his packer handles the grapes on a cost and profit basis. There, again, the grapes belong to the grower until they are sold. The smaller the loss by spoilage, the smaller the loss to the grower.

3. The more orderly sequence of marketing made possible by the decay estimate helps to uphold the price of storage grapes. Consequently, use of the decay estimate aids the grower indirectly even if he has sold his crop f. o. b.

Briefly, this is about the way the spoilage-testing method works:

The packer clips individual berries from various lugs or he can take samples at random and at various times from several parts of the vineyard. In either case, it is important to take a representative sample of the lot to be tested. The samples are fumigated and are then held for 10 days in covered containers, under sterile condi-

tions, at room temperature and at high humidity.

The Fresno experiments have repeatedly shown that fumigation of grapes, valuable as it is, kills only fungus spores on the surface of the fruit and not the fungi that have entered the grapes before harvest. If these fungi are present in grapes being subjected to the experiment, the unmistakable signs of spoilage will appear within 10 days after the grapes have been picked.

Thus, within 10 days after harvest, a forecast can be made of the percentage of decay that would develop in a particular lot of grapes during several months in cold storage.

The packer knows, then, which grapes he ought to market early and which grapes he can hold safely in storage for late marketing without loss from spoilage.

Approximately 6,000 tons of Emperor grapes were in storage in mid-November 1956. That was 90 percent of all grapes stored at that time in California, the country's major grape-producing State.

John M. Harvey
*Biological Services Branch, AMS,
Fresno, California*

More Cotton In Cars

The major automobile manufacturers expect to use more cotton in the interior of their passenger cars.

Decrease in the use of cotton for ceiling coverings will probably be offset by increased use in interior sidewalls (cotton-backed vinyls), visible interior trim, and upholstery.

There's been a big jump in the use of cotton (including lint and waste cotton) in automobiles, from 197.2 million pounds in 1950 to 210.6 million pounds in 1955. Mainly that has been due to the fact that many more cars were produced in 1955 than in 1950.

Farm Income

Realized net income to farmers through June this year—through the first half of 1957—was 2.5 percent above the first-half figure in 1956. Total for the 6-month period this year was at an annual rate of about \$12.1 billion.

Higher cash receipts and Government payments from the soil bank and other programs offset the rise in prices for items used in production. The smaller acreage planted and increasing efficiency aided farmers' efforts to hold down costs.

Farm Production

Total output from United States farms will be down in 1957 for the first time since 1950. Most of the reduction will be in the smaller production of crops.

Crop production may be about 7 percent below that of 1956 and the smallest since 1951. Growing conditions on July 1, 1957, although generally good, were poor for some major crops. Prospects for output of wheat, corn, rice, tobacco, dry beans, peas, and sweetpotatoes are all below production in 1956.

A small cut is likely in livestock and products, with beef cattle down slightly and hogs steady. Egg production likely will continue at record levels though slightly lower this fall. Turkeys and broilers will exceed output in 1956. Milk production is continuing a little ahead of last year's record.

Feed Grains

A slightly smaller total crop is in prospect for 1957. The small decline from 1956 results from a sizable cut in the corn crop. However, stocks of feed grains at the start of 1957-58 will be about 14 percent larger than the carryover a year earlier. Consequently, total supplies are likely to be close to last year's record. Corn supplies will be down slightly from the record 4.6 billion bushels in 1956. Oats and bar-

ley will be in large supply and a record hay supply is in prospect.

Livestock

Prices for meat animals are holding up well at the improved level of recent months. Cattle numbers continue to decline while hog production has leveled off. If consumer income stays high, this year's price gains may last through much of 1958.

Cattle slaughter in the first half of 1957 totaled at about the level in the first half of 1956. But spring slaughter declined slightly and will continue below a year earlier through the rest of 1957. Total 1957 slaughter probably will again be large enough to reduce the cattle inventory. Prices are likely to hold up well and may rise further.

Seasonal price swings are expected, of course. Decline of hog prices this fall will likely be about normal. The trend for grass cattle prices this fall will be seasonally lower. Fed cattle prices probably will be maintained and could rise more.

Eggs

A sharp seasonal rise in farmers' prices this fall is expected and prices are likely to rise above those of a year earlier. A fifth fewer replacement pullets are being raised than in 1956. Consequently fall egg production is likely to decline more than usual and to drop below that of a year earlier.

Broilers

Marketings are running above a year earlier and higher than this spring. But strong seasonal demand pushed prices to the highest levels so far in 1957.

In mid-June 1957, the average to farmers was 20.7 cents per pound, compared with 20.2 cents a year earlier. Some price decline is likely this fall. Placements are large for marketing in fall months when consumer demand begins to weaken.

COTTON YIELDS TREND UP DESPITE ACREAGE RESERVE

Cotton growing in various regions of the United States is wrapped up in a bolt of long-term trends and the acreage reserve program has had varying effects on the pattern of these trends.

In the country as a whole, more cotton is produced from fewer acres and the proportion of total acreage continues to shift to areas where yields are highest.

Regional Trends

Regionally, the acreage reserve program has not stopped the increase in the proportion of plantings in the West. The program may even have stimulated the long-term decline in the Southeast. However, it may also have reversed the long-term decline in the acreage proportion of the Southwest.

Average cotton production nationally in 1952-56 was about 12 percent larger than during the 1920's. Average acreage harvested was 47 percent smaller. Average yields per harvested acre had more than doubled in the same period.

Higher yields have been part of the developing technology of agriculture in this century. Cotton production pushed old records out of the way as the use of fertilizer increased and as better methods of insect and disease control were introduced.

Higher yielding varieties of cotton planted to better land on individual farms also increased production. Of perhaps equal importance were the changing proportions of total cotton acreage planted in the various regions.

Yields have steadily increased in all regions, with the highest yields per acre in the Delta and in the West. The Delta includes Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. The West is Arizona, California, Nevada, and New Mexico. These two regions comprise an ever-increasing proportion of the total national cotton acreage.

Acreage in the Southeast and the Southwest, the regions with lowest yields, has tended to make up a smaller proportion of the national total since the 1920's. The Southeast covers Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Included in the Southwest are Oklahoma and Texas.

Here are the average percentages of total acreage in each region:

	1920's Percent	1952-56 Percent
Delta -----	23.2	27.2
Southeast -----	26.5	18.8
Southwest -----	49.3	45.7
West -----	1.0	8.3

During the 1920's, yields and the rate of increase were both higher in the West than in the other three areas. Second highest yields during the 1920's were in the Delta, where the increase over the years has topped the increase in the Southeast.

Here are the average yields per acre in cultivation:

	1920's Pounds	1952-56 Pounds
Delta -----	183	432
Southeast -----	180	320
Southwest -----	131	222
West -----	285	777

Actual cultivated acreage in all regions except the West decreased by about 38 to 61 percent between the 1920's and 1952-56. Acreage in the West had increased about 4.5 times by 1952-56.

Shift Only Slowed

Acreage allotment programs since 1932 may have slowed the rate of this shift to the areas of relatively high yields—but only slowed. The shift continues. It has been one of the underlying causes of larger production despite smaller acreage.

State acreage allotments for the 1957 crop of upland cotton total about 17.6 million acres. Acreage in cultivation on July 1, 1957, was about 14.1 million.

Under the acreage reserve program, farmers agreed to reduce plantings to 3 million acres less than allotments. This program was the principal cause of the sharp reduction of acreage in cultivation.

Some States signed a greater part of their allotted acreage under the reserve program than did others. As a result, the proportion of the total U. S. cotton acreage represented by each State's actual acreage in cultivation on July 1 differed from the proportion represented by allotted acreage before sign-ups for the reserve program. It also differed from that of a year earlier.

Effects Regionally

After accounting for acreage put into reserve, the proportion of total acreage increased both in the West and in the Southwest—the highest and lowest yielding areas.

Here are figures on proportions of upland cotton by areas:

Area	July 1, 1956	1957 acre- lotment	July 1, 1957
	Per- cent	Per- cent	Per- cent
Delta -----	27.2	26.3	27.2
Southeast -----	18.2	18.3	15.9
Southwest -----	46.8	47.7	48.2
West -----	7.8	7.7	8.7

What effect are the shifts in the proportions of total acreage for 1957 likely to have on the trend in average U. S. yields per acre?

The yields in any 1 year can be quite different from those of previous years or from a trend. Weather and other conditions over which man has little or no control are unpredictable.

If regional proportions of total U. S. acreage of the 1956 crop had been the same as for the 1957 crop, with each region's average yield per acre remaining the same, the U. S. average yield probably would not have changed from the actual figure. The larger proportion of acreage for the Southwest would have about offset the larger proportion in the West.

Frank Lowenstein
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

Corn Acres Planted With Hybrid Seed Now Up to 92.5%

Corn acreage planted with hybrid seed in this country in 1957 declined nearly 3.5 million acres from 1956, according to the Crop Reporting Board. The 1957 total is 68.1 million acres, compared with 71.5 million in 1956.

However, this decline is less than the 5-million-acre drop in all corn planted. The percentage of total acreage planted with hybrid varieties edged upward to 92.5 percent from 91.1 percent in 1956, and 89.4 percent in 1955.

The commercial corn area of the North Central States has been planting nearly all corn acreage with hybrid varieties for a number of years.

Nearly all sections just outside the main commercial area are now planting from about 80 to 99 percent of the acreage with hybrids. All North Atlantic States and Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia planted from 91 to 99 percent with hybrids this year.

There has been a substantial increase in hybrids in recent years in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. North Carolina is now planting about 79 percent of its corn acreage with hybrids, Georgia, 75 percent, South Carolina, 66 percent, and Florida, 89.5 percent.

Gulf States Trend

The Gulf States have also shown a continued upward trend with 1957 hybrid acreage percentages as follows: Alabama, 80.5; Mississippi, 57.5; Louisiana, 61.5; and Texas, 85.0.

In the Rocky Mountain States, gains or losses from 1956 figures are small in each case. The area planted 63 percent with hybrids this year.

All Pacific States have been over the 90-percent mark since 1953.

Robert S. McCauley
Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

HOW DRY IS YOUR COTTONSEED?

It may be possible soon to use a newly invented electric moisture meter to measure the moisture in cottonseed at the gin.

The use of this meter will be a big step forward in setting up a way of grading grower-lots of cottonseed. It should also prove valuable to the oil mills in the storing of their seed for milling.

The planting seed people should also welcome such an instrument since germination depends a great deal on the moisture in the seed.

Why It's Needed

To understand why this new meter is needed by all these groups, let's start our story at the beginning.

In the first place, you know that in the U. S. Department of Agriculture cottonseed grade standards, moisture is one of three quality factors.

Moisture is a tricky proposition. You don't want too much and you don't want too little.

Cottonseed with relatively little moisture will maintain a high germination rate for years. Prime cottonseed with low moisture content has been stored at oil mills for 2 or 3 years and still produced prime products.

Yet cottonseed with extremely low moisture presents a problem for the oil mill since it must be moistened for efficient milling.

On the other hand, seed with high moisture normally can't be used for planting and if the moisture exceeds 12 percent, the seed must be milled as soon as possible or cooled to retard spoilage.

It's too expensive and time consuming (10-14 hours) to apply official standards for grading cottonseed in small lots. You growers, therefore, usually sell to ginneries at average prices without regard to difference in the quality of individual lots.

This practice doesn't work too well at times. It can mean unnecessary risk to ginneries. It is often unfair to the grower.

There is need, therefore, for a system of grading that would be practical for application to sales by farmers. Since moisture promotes rapid spoilage of seed in storage and materially affects the milling properties of seed, it is one of the most important factors in determining the grade. It might even be the most important.

A rapid means of accurate moisture determination is a necessity, therefore, in grading individual lots of cottonseed as sold by farmers.

The new meter measures the degree of moisture in small lots not only accurately but simply and quickly.

The new USDA cottonseed moisture meter is an electronic device, based on the principle of conductivity. In only 4 minutes it gives results comparable to the official oven method of determining moisture which takes 10 to 14 hours.

The technologists who designed the meter have recommended that it be approved for use in grading cottonseed.

If the meter is approved for this purpose, it will become possible for the grower to get small lots of cottonseed graded—and to get the price to which he is entitled.

Marion E. Whitten
Charles E. Holaday
Cotton Division, AMS

Farmers' Prices

(1910-14=100)

Date	Prices received by farmers	Parity index ¹	Parity ratio
July 1956-----	243	287	85
June 1957-----	244	296	82
July 1957-----	247	295	84

¹ Index of prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates.

1956 Wool Incentive Payments Down Somewhat From 1955

Payments to wool growers under the 1956 wool incentive program, somewhat lower than those in 1955 when the program got underway, are now being made by county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation offices.

Substantially the same program as for 1956 is being continued for the 1957 marketing year which began April 1. The incentive price is being continued at 62 cents. Applications for payments under the 1957 program should be filed with county ASC offices not later than April 30, 1958.

Shorn Wool Payments

Shorn wool payments amount to 40 percent of the dollar returns producers received from the sale of shorn wool during the 1956 marketing year. The payment rate on sales of unshorn lambs to compensate for the wool on them is 71 cents per hundredweight of live animal sold.

The payment rate of 40 percent for shorn wool is the percentage needed to bring the average return per pound of wool up to the incentive level. It was determined on the basis of the difference between the average price of 44.3 cents per pound received during the 1956 marketing year and the incentive level of 62 cents.

Since the percentage rate of 40 percent applies to all producers, the higher the price the individual grower received for his wool in the market, the larger his incentive payment and total return per pound.

For example, the grower who sold his wool for 35 cents is receiving a Government payment of 14 cents for a total return per pound of 49 cents. But the grower who received 50 cents for his wool gets a payment of 20 cents, bringing his total return per pound to 70 cents.

The lamb payment rate of 71 cents per hundredweight of live animal is based on an allowance of 5 pounds of wool per 100 pounds of unshorn lamb.

Since lamb wool is generally coarser in grade and shorter in staple length, the value per pound of lamb wool was set at 80 percent of the value per pound of shorn wool.

Under the 1956 program, each producer who owned lambs for 30 days or more and sold them unshorn is eligible for payment. Producers or feeders who bought unshorn lambs and later sold them unshorn or sheared them and sold the wool will have their payments reduced by the amount of the payment due on the weight of unshorn lambs purchased. Under this method, original producers and later breeder or feeder owners share in the payment. Under the 1955 program, the entire payment was made to the owner who sold lambs for slaughter.

Since the average of prices received for shorn wool was a little higher than in 1955 and the incentive level was unchanged, the percentage needed to bring the average return up to the incentive level was smaller. Consequently, 1956 rate payments for both shorn wool and lambs are somewhat lower.

Necessary Deductions

Deductions of 1 cent per pound from shorn wool payments and of 5 cents per hundredweight of live weight from unshorn lamb payments are made for the advertising, promotion, and related market development activities on wool and lambs carried on by the American Sheep Producers Council, Inc. The deductions were approved by producers in a 1955 referendum.

Payments under the 1955 program, the first under the National Wool Act of 1954, amounted to \$57.6 million, including promotion deductions of \$3.1 million. Shorn wool payments amounted to \$50.0 million and lambs payments to \$7.6 million.

Albert M. Hermie
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

FOOD USE OF FATS AND OILS DOWN 1 POUND IN 1956

Fats and oils used in food were spread a little thinner among major outlets in 1956. Total per person declined about 1 pound from 1955. Margarine was the only outlet to increase.

Reported data for all food uses indicates civilian disappearance averaged 44.4 pounds (fat content) in 1956. This is about 1 pound above the 1946-55 average.

Consumption of salad and cooking oils was about the same in 1956 as in 1955. Biggest reduction, about 0.5 pound per capita, was in shortening. Direct use of lard declined for the sixth straight year. Consumption of butter declined slightly after increasing 2 consecutive years.

Margarine Increases

The increase in margarine consumption, about 0.1 pound per person, brought the total to 8.2 pounds, second highest figure recorded. The record high, 8.5 pounds, was in 1954. In recent years, consumption rates of margarine have shown signs of leveling off.

Use of other edible oils, mainly salad and cooking oils, gained steadily from 1932 to 1955. Consumption of 10 pounds per person in 1956 was about the same as the record high in 1955.

Use of shortening in 1956 amounted to about 11 pounds per person. This is down about 0.5 pound from 1955. It is the lowest figure since 1953. Retail prices for shortening were relatively high during most of 1956. This is probably one reason why less shortening was used.

Some shifts from solid to liquid shortening probably occurred during 1956. Liquid shortenings are sometimes reported in the "other edible" category. This category also includes shortenings manufactured wholly from animal fats, such as lard and edible tallow. Consequently, the reported

data tend to understate consumption of shortening in this country.

Direct use of lard per person has dropped each year since 1950. The 9.9 pounds per capita in 1956 was the lowest since 1935.

Greater use of lard in shortening and margarine was favored by prices that were low compared with those for edible vegetable oils. However, this increase was more than offset by the sharp reduction in the use of vegetable oils in shortening.

The amount of butter consumed per person in 1956 averaged 8.7 pounds, compared with 9 pounds in 1955. Retail butter prices increased during most of 1956.

During the past 20 years, use of butter has declined as use of margarine has increased. Butter consumption in 1935-39, an average of 17 pounds per person, was almost double the amount used in 1956. World War II restrictions on the use of butterfat and the rationing of butter to consumers during the war forced a sharp decline in use.

During the war, margarine consumption increased somewhat, despite restricted production and rationed sales. In recent years, the authorized sale of colored margarine in many States and the removal of certain excise taxes have encouraged a rapidly expanding market.

During the last 20 years, margarine gained popularity as a table spread. Its 1956 consumption was almost three times the 2.8 pounds per capita consumption of 1935-39.

Taken together, use of butter and margarine has been declining over the period—partly because other spreads, like mayonnaise and cheese, have become more popular, partly because less bread and potatoes are being consumed per capita.

Industrial Uses

Continuing the trend of recent years, industrial synthetics took a little bigger

share of the market for nonfood uses of fats and oils in 1956. As a result, total use per civilian of industrial animal fats and vegetable oils dropped to about 20 pounds, lowest figure since 1933.

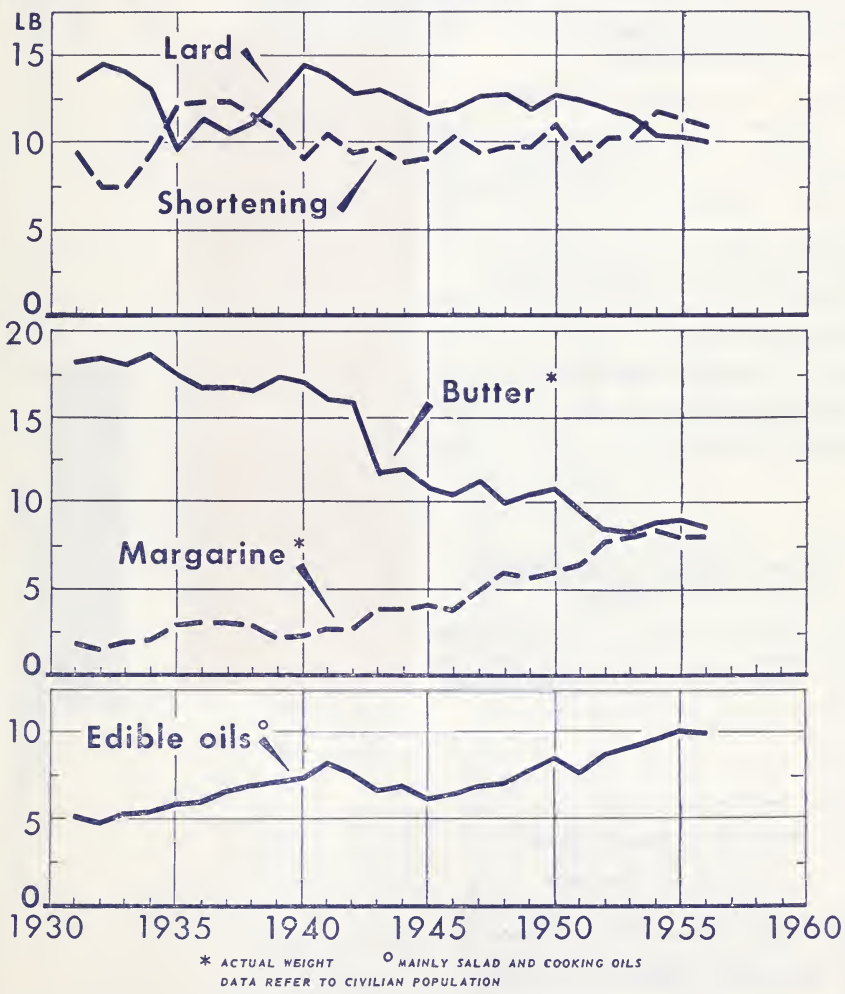
This reduction of 0.5 pound from the 1955 figure was due mainly to a cut of more than 0.5 of a pound per capita in

the amount of fats and oils used in soap.

The per person equivalent of fats and oils used in soaps was about 6 pounds, the lowest figure on record, largely because of increased competition from synthetic detergents.

George W. Kromer
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

DISAPPEARANCE OF FOOD FATS PER PERSON



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AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
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Farmer's Share of Consumer's Food Dollar

May 1956.....	41 percent
April 1957.....	40 percent
May 1957.....	39 percent

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Editor: James M. Buckley

Assistant: Marcelle Masters

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